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ABSTRACT

The reputation of teacher educators in two Israeli universities as conceived by four role set groups--faculty colleagues in arts and sciences, student teachers, practicing secondary teachers, and teacher educators themselves--was studied. Six dimensions of reputation selected for the study were: credibility, knowledgeability in their speciality, general knowledgeability, effectiveness as teachers, status, and orientation to knowledge and research ("clinical" or "scientific"). The Teacher Education Survey (Katz et al., 1982), a three part questionnaire, was the source of data. In Part A, respondents reported on the frequency and nature of contacts between teacher educators and other instructors. In Part B, teacher educators are compared by respondents to other university instructors in terms of the aforementioned six dimensions of reputation. In Part C, participants responded to 10 items representing "clinical" versus "scientific" orientation. Results showed that the reputation of teacher educators in Israel was at least as high as that of other college instructors and that in general this reputation does not depend on any of the following respondent characteristics: sex, subject matter, discipline, position at the university, and role set position. These findings contradict common beliefs about teacher educators as well as preliminary findings from studies conducted in the United States. (JM)

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THE PROFESSIONAL IMAGE AND REPUTATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS IN ISRAEL

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Abstract

The reputation of teacher educators in two Israeli universities as conceived by four role set groups, namely faculty colleagues in arts and sciences, student teachers, practicing secondary teachers and the teacher educators themselves was studied. Teacher educators appear to enjoy a medium level of reputation which resembles that of other college instructors. The relationships between a number of variables associated with attributed reputation are also reported and their implications are discussed.

* * * *

A number of studies in the U.S.A. have reported that teacher educators enjoy mixed, if not poor, reputations among those with whom they interact in the course of their work (e.g. Katz *et al.* 1982, Nelli 1982). They are often criticised for virtually opposite qualities: students and school teachers fault them as excessively theoretical (Buchman 1982), impractical (Lortie, 1975) and high minded, while their colleagues on campus fault them for being atheoretical and non-empirical. One result of this state of affairs is that some senior instructors at schools of education are reluctant to teach student teachers, and prefer, instead, to teach students who study education in regular education courses leading to an academic degree in education. It has also been suggested that many student teachers see their teacher preparation courses as second rate courses and, consequently, invest less study

efforts in these courses compared with regular academic courses in their own discipline (history, biology, etc.).

Katz *et al.* (1982) report interesting results which indicate that overall teacher educators in a midwestern university in the U.S.A. enjoyed rather poor reputations. The present study is a replication and extension of Katz *et al.* (1982) based on the same theoretical framework and using the same data source (The Teacher Education Survey) in two universities in Israel.

Both studies used Merton's concept of a role set, i.e., the complement of role-taker groups associated with a given occupation or profession (see Merton, 1968, pp. 422-438); a collection of categories of interacting role-taker groups that complement the teacher educators' role was defined and identified. The role-set included the following groups: students in a teacher education preservice program; school teachers currently employed; professors of education in foundation fields and *not* primarily engaged in teaching pedagogy or methods classes, and professors of humanities and of sciences.

In the present study we included, as well a sample of teacher educators. Six dimensions of reputation were selected for the study. These dimensions were defined by Katz *et al.* as follows:

1. Credibility

   The extent to which teacher educators appear to "know what they are talking about," are believed to be actually capable of teaching in schools in the ways they advocate and train their preservice students to teach, etc.

2. Knowledgeability in their Speciality

   The extent to which teacher educators are believed to "know their subject" (compared to instructors' knowledge of their subject in other disciplines).

3. General Knowledgeability

   The extent to which teacher educators are believed to be widely and well read, erudite, learned and so forth beyond just their own speciality.

4. Effectiveness as Teachers

   The extent to which teacher educators are reputed to be effective as teachers of their college students (compared to faculty in other disciplines).

5. Status

   Rankings given by role-set members to teacher educators on prestige, status and respect as compared to other college instructors or socially significant others.

6. Orientation to Knowledge and Research

   This dimension is somewhat different from those listed above in that it addresses less obvious and observable aspects of professional conduct. It was based on the work of Freidson (1970) and Pickle (1980) concerning the differences between the way subgroups within a profession respond to research and knowledge. These two orientations, labeled *"clinical"* and *"scientific"*, consist of five inter-related continua as follows:

a. *reflective-active*, - suggesting that the "scientific" orientation is characterized by a tendency to reflection and the "clinical" by the tendency to act or seek action, or prefer action, even in the absence of sufficient data.

b. *conceptual-pragmatic*, - suggesting that the "scientific" orientation includes the desire to grasp the concepts that explain relevant phenomena and to understand *why* things work, whereas the "clinical" orientation is the search for what "works", whether the explanations are available or not.

c. *theoretical-subjective*, - suggests that the "scientific" orientation includes concern for building systems of understandings and concepts whereas the "clinician" places heavy reliance on first hand knowledge and personal experience and accepts conceptual systems if they correspond to subjective impressions.

d. *skeptic-faithful*, - the "scientific" orientation includes concern for the robustness of data or evidence, the appropriateness of the sampling and generally applies the canons of empirical methods to knowledge and information; the "clinician" feels the need to believe in the rightness of a treatment or response and to believe that the course of action chosen will do less harm than good and thus to be able to proceed with confidence.

e. *determinate-indeterminate*, - the "scientific" orientation includes seeking the lawfulness of phenomena from which the

ability to reproduce findings, effects and treatments reliably can be derived; the "clinical" orientation includes the belief that cause-effect relationships may be lawful but cannot be determined in the complexities of "real world" events, they cannot be isolated or controlled in actual practice.

Purpose of Study

The aim of this study is to describe some aspects of the contexts in which teacher educators in Israel work. More specifically the objectives were:

1. To identify the teacher educators image held by themselves, by colleagues at their universities who are not engaged in teacher education, by their students and by practicing secondary school teachers. The following dimensions were studied:
   - 1.1 Their credibility: the extent to which they appear to know what they are talking about in the sense that they are actually capable of teaching in the ways they advocate.
   - 1.2 Their knowledge and expertise: to what extent they are believed to be widely read and demonstrate a broad knowledge of their field.
   - 1.3 Their general knowledgeability, beyond their own specialty.
   - 1.4 Their effectiveness as teachers.
   - 1.5 Their status, prestige and respect.

In all five dimentsion the teacher educators' image was compared with the image of instructors in other disciplines.

2. To compare the views of the four groups (teacher educators, other college instructors, student teachers, practicing teachers) on the extent to which teacher educators practice what they preach.
3. To identify the view of the four groups on teacher educators orientation to knowledge and research as reflected by a continuum with "scientific" orientation on one pole and "clinical" orientation on the other pole. This orientation consists of five scales: relfective - active, conceptual - pragmatic, theoretical-subjective, skeptic - faithful, determinate - indeterminate, representing "scientific" and "clinical" respectively.
4. To obtain information concerning the extent to which teacher educators are seen to be realistic versus idealistic.
5. To identify the correlations among the various attributions pertaining to the image and reputation of teacher educators.
6. To compare the results obtained in two universities in Israel, namely a relatively old and prestigious one and a relatively young one.

Method

Instrument

The Teacher Education Survey (Katz *et al.*, 1982) was the source of data. This questionnaire consists of three parts:

In Part A the respondents report on the frequency and the nature of contacts between teacher educators and other instructors.

In Part B teacher educators are compared to other university in-

structors in terms of credibility, knowledge and expertise, general knowledgeability, effectiveness as teachers and status.

Part C consists of 10 items representing "clinical" versus "scientific" orientations designed as a 5 point Likert scale. There were two items for each of the five dimensions described above. In addition there were two items in which respondents were asked to indicate to what extent teacher educators practice whet they preach and two others which provided information concerning the extent to which teacher educators are seen to be realistic or idealistic in their approach to teaching. Bakcground data on gender, subject matter, disclipline, and position at work, were obtained as well.

Samples and administration

Four groups of subjects responded to the Teacher Education Survey: teacher educators (N = 54), college instructors not engaged in teacher education (N = 60), student teachers (N = 57), practicing teachers (N = 50). 11 of the teacher educators were general college instructors as well. The Teacher Education Survey was translated into Hebrew and distributed among the four groups by mail in the spring, 1982. The rates of useable returns were as follows: teacher educators 72%, college instructors 30%, student teachers 76% and practicing teachers 50%.

61% of the respondents were males. 60% were affiliated with the old university and 40% with the new university. Of the college instructors, half were natural scientists, a quarter represented the

humanities and the rest were social scientists. Of the student teachers and practicing teachers about half were in the natural sciences and mathematics and the rest in humanities and social sciences. All teachers and student teachers were affiliated to secondary schools.

The data were analyzed by calculating frequency distributions, means and standard deviations, correlations, t tests and analysis of variance.

It should be noted that many of the college instructors not engaged in teacher education were reluctant to respond, arguing that they were not able to express opinions on something which was so unfamiliar to them. The other three samples found the questionnaire interesting and had no problem in responding to the various items.

Findings

Contacts between teacher educators and other instructors

50% of the instructors reported that they met with teacher educators at least once a week, 14% at least once a month and the rest met rarely. 50% met to discuss matters related to their work, and the rest met socially or informally.

Reputation of teacher educators

Table I presents the results pertaining to the attributed reputation of teacher educators by all the subjects.

insert Table I about here

It may be seen that as far as knowledge and overall credibility are

concerned about two thirds of the respondents consider teacher educators and other instructors to be similar and the rest divide equally between better or worse. However, teacher educators excell with regard to teaching effectiveness as well as concerning their potential contribution to the university.

Since four groups, namely college instructors in arts and science, teacher educators, student teachers and practicing teachers had participated it was attempted to find out whether these four groups differed from each other. The results presented in Table II reveal no statistically significant differences among the three groups still in college. Interestingly practicing teachers who looked back at their college experiences attributed to teacher educators significantly higher reputation than the other three groups (see Table II).

Insert Table II about here

It is interesting to note that the self attributions of teacher educators were generally similar to the attributions made by others, but, perhaps not surprisingly, they tended to emphasize their special effectiveness as teachers. There were no statistically significant differences either by gender or by subject matter discipline, or by position at the university, or between the two universities.

Attributed practicality

Responding to the question "Based on your impression of the teacher educators in your university, to what extent do you think that they

offer ideas and techniques that will *really* work in the schools?" the distributions of the responses were: little - 15%, moderately - 54%, to a great extent - 31%. On a 3 point scale in which 1 = little, 2 = moderately and 3 = to a great extent, $\bar{x}$ = 2.16, S.D. = .66. Responding to the question: "Using your own impressions, how would you rate the teacher education faculty in terms of their ability to actually implement their own ideas and recommendations?" the following results were obtained: low - 18%, medium - 54%, high - 28%; $\bar{x}$ = 2.11, S.D. = .67. We combined the responses to these two questions and obtained $\bar{x}$ = 2.13, S.D. = .56. The combined scale will be designated as "Practice". Comparing the responses of teacher educators (N = 34) to those of non-teacher educators (N = 167) on this scale the following results were obtained: for teacher educators $\bar{x}$ = 2.50, S.D. = .40; for others $\bar{x}$ = 2.06, S.D. = .56 ($t = 5.42$, $p < 0.0001$). Apparently teacher educators view themselves more favorably than others with regard to "practicing what they preach".

The scientific-clinical continuum

Table III presents the results pertaining to the place attributed to teacher educators on the "*scientific-clinical*" dimension. The idealists-realists scale is included as well.

Insert Table III about here

One half of the statements in the questionnaire represent the "scientific" and the other half represent the "clinical". In order to be

able to sum up the results, the "clinical" items were inverted so that a high score in each item indicates agreement with the "scientific" approach. The five dimensions are presented in Table III, each covered by two items which were randomly distributed in the questionnaire.

The results indicate that overall, teacher educators are seen as occupying the midpoint on the "scientific-clinical" continuum. However, in certain aspects, such as employing educational principles to solve problems (determinate), basing actions on reasoning (reflective) and seeking reasons (conceptual), they tend to be more "scientific", while on others namely faithful and subjective they tend to be more "clinical". As well teacher educators are seen as more realistic than idealistic.

Two statistically significant differences were found between teacher educators and others in relation to the attributed teacher educator practices: Teacher educators viewed themselves as more reflective than others ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12, S.D. = 0.55; $\bar{x}$ = 3.67, S.D. = 0.63; respectively; $t = 4.16$, $p < 0.0001$). As well, non teacher educators conceived teacher educators to be more idealistic and less realistic ($\bar{x}$ = 2.78, S.D. = 0.91; $\bar{x}$ = 2.29, S.D. = 0.81 for non teacher educators and teacher educators respectively; $t = 3.06$, $p > 0.01$). There were no other statistically significant differences between the four samples. The high level of agreement between the groups adds substantial credibility to our findings.

Relationships

A correlation of 0.49 was found between the total reputation score and practice. Thus a high reputation is positively associated with the ability of teacher educators to teach as they preach as well as with the extent to which their suggestions are conceived as having a high probability to actually work in class. A correlation of 0.34 was found between the total reputation score and the tendency to view teaching idealistically. Since the mean score on this scale was rather low ($\bar{x}$ = 2.72), it appears that, under these circumstances, a teacher educator who is capable of detaching himself from the reality and suggesting some new and more idealistic alternatives is viewed more favorably than one who just sticks to the present reality of the classroom. This does not imply that this relationship would always be linear. More probably a balanced position between idealism and reality would be more desirable.

While Katz *et al.* (1982) do not report any results pertaining to the relationship between reputation dimensions and the "scientific-clinical" dimensions they do offer two interesting hypotheses about expected relationships as follows:

1. Classroom teachers who rate teacher educators high on the five dimentions of reputation (credibility, knowledgeability, etc.) tend to see them as more "clinical" than "scientific" in orientation to knowledge.
2. Faculty colleagues who rate teacher educators high on the five dimensions of reputation tend to see them as more "scientific" than "clinical" in orientation to knowledge.

Table IV presents the correlations pertaining to these hypotheses.

Insert Table IV about here

The second hypothesis is supported by our findings for three out of the five dimensions as well as for the total reputation score. College instructors indeed associate reputation with general knowledge, overall credibility and potential contribution to the functioning of the university. On the other hand, for them reputation is hardly related either to teaching effectiveness or to knowledge of the field of teaching. As to the first hypothesis, although most correlations are statistically insignificant, there is no doubt that compared with the college faculty, practicing teachers indeed associate reputation with a more "clinical" approach. It is interesting to note that student teachers hold a middle position between the college faculty and the practicing teachers. Notably only the student teachers clearly, although weakly, associate reputation with teaching effectiveness.

Table V presents data which indicate to what extent is reputation related to each of the five "scientific-clinical" dimensions.

Insert Table V about here

The data in Table V show that all the scientific dimensions with one exception, namely "skepticism", are associated with reputation by college faculty. On the other hand student teachers respect the "theoretical" and "reflective" dimensions of the "scientific" as well as the "pragmatic" dimension (not the "conceptual") of the "clinical". Practicing teachers tend to associate reputation with a "clinical"

approach, especially so with the "indeterminate" and "faithful" dimensions.

Discussion

The main finding of our study is that the reputation of teacher educators in Israel is at least as high as that of other college instructors and that in general this reputation does not depend on any of the following characteristics of the respondents: sex, subject matter discipline, position at the university and the role set position (college instructors in the arts and sciences, teacher educators, student teachers and practicing teachers).

The only results reported by Katz *et al.* (1982) were those dealing with the five dimensions of reputation presented in Table I. Katz *et al.* (1982) found that, overall students assigned higher ratings to the reputations than did the other persons in the role set. Our results reveal no such differences, perhaps because our student teachers were aiming at secondary schools and their undergraduate studies and status is equal to that of college students in the arts and sciences. Our overall mean on reputation is 2.12 which compares well with the mean of 2.13 obtained for elementary student teachers by Katz *et al.* (1982). Since in our study there were no statistically significant differences regarding the reputation of teacher educators among three participating samples and the fourth, namely practicing teachers hold even higher reputation than other groups, it may be concluded that unlike in the U.S. mid west university, teacher educators in Israel enjoy a relatively

high reputation which resembles that of other college instructors. On the other hand, in both studies the teacher educators received the highest rating on teaching effectiveness. Indeed, teacher educators would be expected to exhibit effective teaching. Yet, when ask about the extent to which teacher educators teach the way they preach, non teacher educators believe that they do so only partially and the teacher educators view themselves more favorably in this aspect. Since this is one of the few differences found between the attributions given by teacher educators and others, it deserves further attention. Teacher educators have been known to serve as a model. Their influence by how they perform may often be greater than that of the content of their courses. It is, therefore important to alert them to the apparent discrepancy between what they preach and how they teach.

Katz *et al.* (1982) did not report their results pertaining to the "scientific-clinical" continuum. However, their discussion of the importance of this portion of the study is important. The interest in studying the attributions on this continuum stems from the concern that attributions made to teacher educators by one group in their role set might be opposite to those made by another. Thus, for example, students and school teachers might dismiss teacher educators as high-minded, impractical, idealistic, too theoretical or even scientific; whereas their colleagues on campus might attribute to them exactly the opposite qualities. This concern led to our interest in the two contrasting "orientations to knowledge" derived from Freidson's study of the sociology of knowledge in the field of medicine (1970). On the other hand,

when teachers attribute a scientific orientation to teacher educators, it carries with it a "put-down" meaning, implying little credibility, a certain quality of being "out of touch" with the way things really are, distancing the teacher educators from the so-called "grass roots" where the "action really is" (cf. Buchanan, 1982). If the humanities and science faculty attribute the scientific orientation to teacher educators, it is likely to carry a different meaning. It might perhaps signify that teacher educators are true faculty peers to be accorded the respect due to all other scholars or academics. On the other hand the attribution of a clinical orientation made by faculty colleagues would very likely carry a similar kind of "put down" significance, indicating that perhaps teacher educators do not really belong to academe or fail to measure up to campus norms of a scholarly orientation and behavior. However this very same attribution of clinical orientation made by students and school teachers might signify camaraderie, collegiality and respect for their know-how, practicality, sensitivity to the realities of school life, etc. We found practically no statistically significant differences among the four role set groups regarding the mean scores on the "scientific-clinical" dimensions. However, we did find that while for college faculty reputation was associated with a "scientific" orientation, for practicing teachers it was more strongly associated with a "clinical" orientation. Student teachers occupy a middle position between the two.

The finding that in general the attributed reputation and orientation toward knowledge of teacher educators in two universities in

Israel is practically the same for the four role set groups, contradicts common beliefs as well as preliminary findings in the U.S.A. These results may be regarded as providing a favorable feedback to Israeli teacher educators. The balance they strike between theory and practice, between realism and idealism, between the "scientific" and the "clinical" appears, in general, to be just right. College professors assigned to teach student teachers need not view this assignment as "down grading" and may expect rather favorable reception from their students. Since expectations often fulfill themselves (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968), teacher educators may be well advised to maintain a high level of expectations from their student teachers as a means for upgrading the quality of teacher education studies. In this way they will keep up with the relatively high reputation they enjoy.

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Table I

Distribution of responses (in percents) and mean scores comparing the reputation of teacher educators to that of other university instructors

(N = 201)

Characteristic	1 Worse or lower	2 About the same	3 Better or higher	$\bar{x}$*	SD
Effectiveness as teachers	7	51	42	2.35	.61
Knowledge of special discipline	12	67	21	2.10	.57
General knowledge	18	62	20	2.02	.62
Overall credibility, Esteem	20	62	18	1.99	.62
Potential contribution to the university	18	53	29	2.11	.68
Total reputation				2.12	.42

* On a 3 point scale

α Cronbach for the 5 items reputation scale = 0.69

Table II

The Reputation of Teacher Educators in the Eyes of Four Role Set Groups

ITEM	1 Instructors N = 56 $\bar{x}$	S.D.	2 Teacher Educators N = 24 $\bar{x}$	S.D.	3 Student Teachers N = 53 $\bar{x}$	S.D.	4 Practicing Teachers N = 45 $\bar{x}$	S.D.	F df = 3, 175	Duncan Test Statistically Significant Differences Between Groups 1:2	1:3	1:4	2:3	2:4	3:4
Effectiveness as teachers	2.46	.53	2.70	.48	2.04	.62	2.46	.60	8.01**		*	*	*	*	*
Knowledge of special discipline	1.94	.55	1.90	.57	2.15	.45	2.33	.65	5.00**			*		*	
General knowledge	1.99	.68	1.70	.48	1.92	.47	2.28	.64	3.84*			*		*	*
Overall credibility; esteem	2.06	.54	1.67	.50	1.79	.64	2.20	.65	4.83**					*	*
Potential contribution to the university	2.04	.65	1.89	.93	1.98	.64	2.47	.61	4.95**			*		*	*
Total reputation	2.10	.39	1.99	.39	1.98	.40	2.34	.43	6.85**			*		*	*

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table III

Distribution (in percents), mean scores* and standard deviations of responses attributed to the practices and behaviors of teacher educators (N = 201)

ITEM	1+2 Disagree	4+5 Agree	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
THEORETICAL - SUBJECTIVE			2.98	0.69
1. Don't rely mainly on personal experience	52	21	2.59	1.04
2. Apply theories to improve practice	14	51	3.38	1.95
DETERMINATE - INDETERMINATE			3.59	0.69
3. Problems based on principles	15	61	3.63	1.02
4. Principles are used to solve problems	11	61	3.56	0.80
REFLECTIVE - ACTIVE			3.75	0.64
5. Various options for action are considered	6	72	3.80	0.78
6. Reasoning precedes action	9	65	3.70	0.91
SKEPTIC - FAITHFUL			2.91	0.74
7. Do not rely heavily on intuition	40	25	2.82	0.99
8. Suggestions are based on research evidence	34	34	2.99	0.99
CONCEPTUAL - PRAGMATIC			3.25	0.66
9. Reasons for success are considered	23	48	3.35	1.02
10. It matters why things work	25	39	3.15	0.95
IDEALISTIC - REALISTIC			2.69	0.91
11. No direct contact with school life	44	23	2.72	1.11
12. Schools conceived in idealistic terms	55	27	2.66	1.21
Total			3.19	0.38

*On a 5 point scale in which 1 = absolutely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, 5 = absolutely agree

Table IV

Correlations between dimensions of attributed reputation and attributed "scientific" approach by three role set groups

Dimension	College instructors N = 75	Student teachers N = 54	Practicing teachers N = 45
Effectiveness as teachers	.12	.20*	-.11
Knowledge of special discipline	.12	.05	-.29*
General knowledge	.34**	.10	-.17
Overall credibility	.40**	-.14	-.02
Potential contribution	.40**	.04	-.17
Total reputation	.37**	.08	-.18

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

1) Since there were no statistically significant differences between teacher educators and the arts and science faculty all college instructors are treated as one group.

Table V

Correlations between attributed reputation and five dimensions of attributed "scientific" approach by three role set groups

Dimension	College instructors N = 75	Student teachers N = 54	Practicing teachers N = 45
Theoretical (subjective)	.20*	.24*	.09
Determinate (indeterminate)	.39**	-.10	-.26*
Reflective (active)	.42**	.37**	.05
Skeptic (faithful)	.02	.08	-.20*
Conceptual (pragmatic)	.23*	-.34**	-.11
Total scientific	.37**	.08	-.18

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p > 0.01$